

Section V — Special Issues and Exceptions

Although most district and campus accountability ratings can be determined through Standard Analysis – the rating criteria detailed in Section III, *1997 Accountability Rating Criteria and Standards* – there are special circumstances which require a closer examination. Accommodating the diversity of Texas public schools increases the complexity of the accountability system, but it also increases the fairness of the ratings ultimately assigned. This section also describes the routine data analyses conducted before applying the accountability system criteria and standards.

Identifying Who Needs Special Treatment

Ratings

Districts and campuses may require special treatment with respect to **accountability ratings** if one of the following circumstances applies:

- after undergoing Standard Analysis, the accountability rating is *Academically Unacceptable / Low-performing, Recognized, or Exemplary*, and there are fewer than 30 total students tested;
- the campus meets the criteria for a non-traditional school;
- the campus has no TAAS results; or
- the campus operates on a year-round calendar.

Only those districts and campuses falling into one of the categories given above are affected by the special issues and exceptions examined in this section.

Comparable Improvement

With respect to **Comparable Improvement**, campuses are not evaluated if one of the following circumstances applies:

- the number of matched students for the campus is less than 10; or
- there are fewer than 24 campuses with 10 or more matched students in the 40 school comparison group.

Campuses Not Rated in 1997

In 1997, there are several circumstances under which a campus is not rated under the standard accountability procedures. These are schools where:

the grades served are kindergarten or below, and the campus is unpaired [*Not Rated*];

all students are served in special education programs [*evaluated through special programs district effectiveness and compliance review*]; or

the campus is an alternative education school and chooses Optional Evaluation. [*See the discussion on Alternative Education later in this section.*]

In addition, a campus opening mid-year will not receive an accountability rating for the year in which it opens. In practice, this means that an accountability rating is issued for all campuses with student enrollment reported on 1996-97 PEIMS Submission 1. However, the district accreditation rating is still affected by TAAS results for all non-special education students who were enrolled in the district as of October 25, 1996.

Campus ID Changes

Every year, districts may change campus identifiers, the unique 9-digit county-district-campus number, due to closing old schools, opening new schools, and changing grade spans. The Texas Education Agency's data system can accommodate these events; however, it does not track these organizational changes over time. Unintended consequences can occur when districts "recycle" campus ID numbers. Because two-year performance changes are a component of the accountability rating system, comparisons when a campus configuration has changed may be inappropriate. The following example illustrates this situation:

EXAMPLE: A campus served grades 7 and 8 in 1996, but in 1997, serves as a 6th grade center and the district did not request a new campus number for the new configuration. Instead, the same ID number used in 1996 was maintained. Therefore, in 1997 when the agency is calculating Required Improvement or gain for monetary awards for that campus, grade 6 performance is being compared with the prior year's grade 7 and 8 performance.

Campus ID Changes *(cont.)*

The decision to change a campus number is a local one; however, districts should exercise caution in requesting new numbers and in continuing to use existing numbers when the student population or the grades offered change. **Districts are strongly encouraged to request new campus numbers when school organizational configurations change dramatically.** The TEA Division of Customer Assistance and Training can assist in the establishment of new, or retirement of old, campus identifiers.

Small Numbers of Students

Districts and campuses with small numbers of students present a special challenge to the accountability system. There are two types of small numbers situations. One is small numbers of students within a group (e.g., few African American test takers in reading). The second is small numbers of total students, that is, few total students tested or few total students in grades 7-12. Descriptions of the size requirements and the use of data in these situations are presented below.

Minimum Size Requirements

All districts and campuses are rated using standard evaluation criteria, as presented in Section III, *1997 Accountability Rating Criteria and Standards*, and are evaluated for Additional Acknowledgments using standard criteria as presented in Section IV, *Acknowledgments and Recognitions*. Standard evaluation includes consideration all students results and the results of individual student groups if they meet the minimum size requirements specified below. **Only those student groups which meet the size requirements are evaluated in the accountability analysis.** Student groups for ratings and additional indicators other than college admissions tests are African American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged. Student groups for college admissions tests are African American, Hispanic, and White.

TAAS – Tested Students

With respect to TAAS, to be included in the ratings evaluation, an individual student group for a district / campus must have:

tested at least 30 students within a student group (summed across all grades) for any subject area, and the student group must comprise at least 10 percent of all test takers in each subject area; **or**

tested at least 200 students within the student group, even if that group represents less than 10 percent of all test takers.

Dropout Rate

With respect to dropouts, to be included in the ratings evaluation, a district / campus must have:

For *all students*:

- ➡ at least 10 dropouts; **and**
- ➡ at least 30 7th-12th graders in membership during the school year.

For *each individual student group*:

- ➡ at least 10 dropouts; **and**
- ➡ at least 30 7th-12th graders in membership during the school year, and the group must comprise at least 10 percent of all 7th-12th graders. **or**
- ➡ at least 200 7th-12th graders must be reported within the student group.

College Admissions Tests

With respect to college admissions tests, to be included in the evaluation for Additional Acknowledgment, an individual student group for a district / campus have:

at least 30 graduates within the student group and the student group must comprise at least 10 percent of all graduates; **or**

at least 200 graduates within the student group; **and**

at least 10 examinees within the student group.

Only non-special education graduates are evaluated.

TAAS / TASP Equivalency

With respect to the TAAS / TASP equivalency indicator, to be included in the evaluation for Additional Acknowledgment, an individual student group for a district / campus must have:

at least 30 graduates within the student group and the student group must comprise at least 10 percent of all graduates; **or**

at least 200 graduates within the student group.

Only first-time tested, non-special education graduates are evaluated.

Comparable Improvement

No size minimums are applied when calculating TLI average growth; however, a minimum is checked before determining a Comparable Improvement quartile. Any campus with fewer than 10 matched students will not be evaluated on Comparable Improvement. Also, any campus with fewer than 24 campuses in its 40-campus group having 10 or more matched students are not evaluated for Comparable Improvement. (See Section VIII, 1997 *Campus Comparable Improvement* for more information.)

Special Analysis

Districts and campuses with small numbers of total students present special challenges regarding the stability of the data as well as the confidentiality of student performance. While all districts and campuses will be initially rated under standard evaluation, these small districts and campuses will be subject to Special Analysis under the circumstances specified below. If Special Analysis is necessary, only total student performance will be examined.

If standard evaluation indicates that a rating of *Exemplary* or *Recognized* may be appropriate, then Special Analysis will be conducted when there are fewer than 30 total students tested in two or more TAAS subject areas.

If Standard Analysis indicates that a rating of *Academically Unacceptable / Low-performing* may be appropriate, then Special Analysis is conducted only on the indicator(s) with fewer than 30 total students tested which caused the district / school to be considered *Academically Unacceptable / Low-performing*.

NOTE: Where standard evaluation results in a rating of *Academically Acceptable / Acceptable*, no further analysis is performed, even if the district or campus has fewer than 30 students tested in one or more subjects of the TAAS (summed across all grades tested).

METHODOLOGY FOR SPECIAL ANALYSIS

Special Analysis to determine accountability ratings consists of analyzing trends in performance since 1994 by reviewing past AEIS reports and using professional judgment to determine if current performance is an aberration or an indication of consistent performance. Final ratings are then assigned.

Pairing Campuses

Identifying Campuses

Accountability Ratings

All schools in the state serving grades 1-12 must receive an accountability rating. Beginning in 1994, campuses with no TAAS values were incorporated into the accountability system by having districts choose another campus within the same district with which it shared TAAS data and, if applicable, an accountability rating.

When determining the performance rating of the paired school, any indicator data that are available for the school are analyzed. For example, the attendance rate and dropout rates for a school with grades 11-12 are used in conjunction with the TAAS data from its "pair" to arrive at a rating for that 11-12 school.

Districts will have the opportunity to reaffirm prior pairing decisions and to provide new information by completing Paired Schools Form 1. (See sample on page 33.) This form is provided to all those superintendents whose districts have schools serving grades higher than kindergarten, but not grades with TAAS data, *i.e.*, grades 1, 2, 9, 11, or 12. Districts will be sent the forms in March, with a due date to the Texas Education Agency of April 30, 1997.

Comparable Improvement

Without pairing, Comparable Improvement cannot be calculated for those schools without tested students who can be matched to prior year TAAS results. For Comparable Improvement, schools with a high grade of 3 must be paired using the Paired Schools Form 2. Form 2 will be sent only to superintendents whose districts have schools with a high grade of 3. These forms are due back to the agency by April 30, 1997. Campus pairings used for accountability ratings (identified on Form 1) are used for Comparable Improvement as well.

Pairing Guidelines

The following guidelines for pairing campuses apply:

In general, a campus needs to be paired if it does not have any TAAS results. A campus serving grades K-2 only, grade 9 only, or grades 11-12 only are examples of campuses which need to be paired.

Districts will make the decisions regarding pairing and will inform the state.

Schools which are paired must have a "feeder" relationship and the grades should be contiguous. For example, a K-2 school should be paired with the 3-5 school that accepts its students into 3rd grade. A 9th grade center may be paired with either a high school serving grades 10-12, or the feeder middle school.

Sample 1997 Paired Schools Form 1

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

PAIRED SCHOOLS

FORM 1

Schools to be Paired for 1997 Accountability System
(due to no TAAS data)

District Name SAMPLE DISTRICT
District 999999
Region 99

Must be returned by April 30, 1997
to
Texas Education Agency
Division of Performance Reporting
1701 N. Congress
Austin, TX 78701
or
FAX: (512) 475-3584

To Be Paired:

Campus Name	Campus Number	Grade Span
SAMPLE PRIMARY	999999101	PK - 02

Paired With: (Based on 1995/96 pairing)

Campus Name	Campus Number	Grade Span
<u>SAMPLE ELEMENTARY</u>	<u>999999102</u>	<u>03 - 05</u>

- * If the pairing information shown above is still appropriate, please confirm by signing and returning this form.
- * If you wish to change any of the pairing relationships, please do so by modifying the information on this form, signing, and returning it.
- * If the information under the "Paired With" column is blank, please indicate the campus name, number, and grade span with which the "To Be Paired" campus will share TAAS results. Use the guidelines described in the cover letter and contained in the 1997 Accountability Manual to make pairing decisions.

These paired schools should reflect the current 1996/97 grade configurations, not 1997/98 grade configurations.

Signature _____ Date _____
Print Name _____ Telephone _____
Print Title _____

Pairing Guidelines (cont.)

Some different types of multiple pairings are possible:

- ➡ If several K-2 schools “feed” the same 3-5 school, all of the K-2 schools may be paired with that 3-5 school.
- ➡ If a K-2 school “feeds” several 3-5 schools, only one 3-5 school may be selected. In this case, the district should make the best choice based on local criteria.

Districts may change pairings from year to year; however, these changes should be based on reasonable justification (e.g., change in attendance zones affecting feeder patterns). Be aware that any prior year performance will be calculated using the pairing relationships in place for the year in question. Thus, additional performance requirements such as Required Improvement will be calculated with the two different pairings.

Non-Traditional Schools

Charter Schools

By statute, the State Board of Education is authorized to charter 20 open-enrollment schools across the state. The majority of those chartered by the board will be serving students during the 1996-97 school year, and will be subject to standard evaluation for ratings. Those in operation by October 25, 1996, the “as of” date for PEIMS Submission 1, will receive a 1997 accountability rating. These are stand-alone school ratings; performance results of students in these schools do not impact any other district or campus ratings.

Alternative Education Schools

As previously mentioned, all schools in the state serving grades 1-12 must receive a campus rating; however, the accountability system recognizes that some schools offering an alternative program may need to be evaluated under different criteria than regular campuses. Alternative education campuses have two choices for evaluation:

Standard Evaluation.

Even though a campus meets the criteria for an alternative education school, it may opt to be evaluated against the same standards and criteria as regular schools, and be rated as either *Exemplary*, *Recognized*, *Acceptable*, or *Low-Performing*. If the rating is at least *Acceptable*, the campus can be considered for a statutorily authorized award program, if one is funded.

Alternative Education Schools (cont.)

Optional Evaluation.

A campus defined as an alternative education school may choose to be evaluated under different performance standards and indicators than those used for regular campuses. The development of standards, methodology, and criteria for the optional evaluation of alternative education schools is the responsibility of the Division of Non-traditional School Accountability in the Department of Accountability and School Accreditation. Districts conduct self-evaluations against approved criteria; these are analyzed by agency staff and peer reviewers.

On August 1, schools which have chosen the Optional Evaluation receive a rating of *Delayed: Alternative Education*. This rating is finalized in September, changing to either *Alternative Education: Acceptable* or *Alternative Education: Needing Peer Review*. Schools receiving the latter rating will receive on-site peer review visits over the next school year. Refer to the latest edition of the *Alternative Accountability System Manual* available from the Division of Non-traditional School Accountability for detailed information about rating alternative education schools.

With the exception of shared services arrangements (fiscal agent only) and privately operated residential treatment centers as described below, performance data for all schools in a district will be included in the district analysis, regardless of whether the alternative education school(s) was evaluated under the standard or optional criteria.

Shared Services Arrangements

In 1997, performance results (TAAS results, reported dropouts, attendance rates, and college admissions test results) for students reported at schools operated by the fiscal agent of a shared services arrangement **may or may not** affect the district accreditation status of the reporting district, depending on the type of school.

Alternative Education Shared Services Arrangements. Performance results for students reported at alternative education schools operated by the fiscal agent of a shared services arrangement **do not** affect the district accreditation status of the reporting district. However, these results are included in regional and state summaries. The list of districts identified as members of a shared services arrangement is derived from information provided to the Division of Non-traditional School Accountability on the 1996-97 Alternative Campus Registration Form by March 14, 1997.

Other Types of Shared Services Arrangements. Performance results reported for students participating in any non-alternative education cooperative school are attributed to the campus and district at which the student is reported. TAAS results for students served in special education do not affect accountability ratings.

Shared Services Arrangements
(cont.)

Beginning in 1997-98, the *PEIMS Data Standards* require student attribution information for students served through shared services arrangements to be reported. The goal is to be able to attribute the performance of students served by shared services arrangements to the appropriate member school district for rating purposes.

Privately Operated Residential Treatment Facilities

In 1997, the commissioner will treat districts with alternative education programs at residential facilities similarly to the fiscal agents of alternative education shared services arrangements in the accountability system, so long as the appropriate coding procedures are followed. [Regional PEIMS coordinators can advise districts on these procedures.] Performance results for approved residential facilities are used to determine a campus rating (standard or optional evaluation), but **are not** be used to evaluate the accreditation status of the reporting district. The list of these schools will be derived from information provided to the Division of Non-traditional School Accountability on the 1996-97 Alternative Campus Registration Form by March 14, 1997.

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs

Performance results of students served in juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEPs) **do** affect district and campus accountability ratings. Districts affected by this type of facility should, to the best of their ability, determine the disposition of students served so that they may appropriately report student-level data for accountability purposes.

For counties with a population of 125,000 or more, *Texas Education Code* §37.011(h) requires that a student enrolled at the JJAEP be reported as if the student were at his / her regularly assigned campus and education program. Each district that sends students to a JJAEP is responsible for attributing attendance, dropout status, and TAAS performance back to the campus to which the student was assigned immediately prior to placement within the JJAEP. These data affect the accountability ratings of the sending district and campus.

A JJAEP in a large county may choose to participate in the alternative education accountability system. Refer to the latest edition of the *Alternative Accountability System Manual* available from the Division of Non-traditional School Accountability for detailed information about rating JJAEPs.

Year-Round Education Schools

Schools and districts operating in year-round education (YRE) settings have the option of testing later in the calendar year to accommodate differences in days of instruction. For school year 1996-97, approximately 50,000 students are expected to be tested in the optional TAAS administration. The timing of the TAAS testing and the release of the accountability ratings are issues for campuses and districts using a non-traditional school calendar.

Alternative TAAS Testing Dates

To address the timing of the TAAS assessment, optional test administrations have been scheduled for March 25 (writing) and June 3 - 6 (reading, mathematics, science, and social studies) to better equalize the days of instruction received prior to testing. Requests to test in other weeks in June are considered on a case-by-case basis for schools where the scheduled testing date conflicts with intersession dates, multi-tracking, or the first week back from intersession.

Schools can select the alternate testing dates if the difference in the number of instructional days between year-round education and traditional calendar students is more than 15 days at the time of the standard administrations.

Rating Release Date

Because test results for students assessed in June are not available until early- to mid-August, a second notification date for ratings is set for September 1.

Districts and campuses which test some of their YRE students in June and some in the regular administration receive preliminary accountability ratings on August 1. Final ratings for these districts and campuses are issued on September 1.

Districts and campuses which test all of their YRE students in June receive accountability ratings on September 1 only. On August 1, a *Delayed: YRE* rating is issued to these schools. No districts receive a *Delayed* rating due to YRE testing unless all of the students in the district test in June.

